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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

HONOURS AND AWARDS

ARMY DEPARTMENT

Whitehall,
London SW1A 2HB

12th June 1979

Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct

Captain Anthony Michael Duncan McKECHNIE (492706), Royal Regiment of Artillery.

For bravery in helping rescue members of a ski party after an avalanche.

AIR FORCE DEPARTMENT

Whitehall,
London SW1A 2HB

12th June 1979

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the following awards:

Air Force Cross

Flight Lieutenant Ross PAYNE (4231693), Royal Air Force.

Flight Lieutenant Payne has been employed as a Qualified Flying Instructor with the Lightning Training Flight at R.A.F. Binbrook since December 1978. On 12th March 1979 he was carrying out an aerobatic display practice in a Lightning F3 in the air-space above Royal Air Force Binbrook when he found that he was unable to roll upright from an inverted fly-past at 1,000 feet and 320 knots because the control column was restricted to very little left travel. He was faced with a particularly unpleasant emergency but rose to the occasion and by the use of rudder he managed to roll upright, whereupon the aircraft showed a tendency to roll to the right. By further use of opposite rudder, he was able to hold the roll, climb the aircraft to reduce speed and reach a safer height. At 12,000 feet he carried out a handling check and discovered that, with only one inch approximately of available aileron travel on the control column, the aircraft could be held in straight and level flight at 240 knots with full left rudder. Realising that he could not safely recover to Royal Air Force Binbrook (where

the cross wind was 60 degrees off the runway, at speeds of 25 to 50 knots) he decided to fly to Royal Air Force Coningsby where the runway was nearly into wind. En route, Flight Lieutenant Payne carried out a slow-speed handling check in the approach configuration to assess the feasibility of attempting to land. He found that, at 185 knots (10 knots higher than the normal approach speed) and with undercarriage and flap down, he was able to hold the aircraft wings level but at higher speeds the effort required became increasingly severe and at lower speeds it was not possible to stop the aircraft rolling to the right and descending. He decided it was feasible to make a straight-in approach at 185 knots and elected to try to land the aircraft despite the obvious risks. His first approach had to be aborted because turbulence and wind gusts caused the right wing to drop and the situation became too dangerous. He tried again, but suffered the same difficulties and this approach also was abandoned. Undaunted by his two previous unsuccessful attempts he courageously made a third approach and by exercising supreme skill he was able to hold the aircraft in a steady wing-level descent at 185 knots until it was about 6 feet off the ground when a gust caused the right wing to drop. Although faced with yet more hazards he was undeterred by the danger. He quickly assessed that applying power to overshoot at this stage would induce roll and could be dangerous, so he continued the landing. As power was reduced the starboard wheel and wing tip touched the runway but the aircraft righted itself and the left wheel touched down and the landing-run thereafter was controllable. There is no doubt that Flight Lieutenant Payne was presented with an extremely hazardous emergency at a critical time of flight. His coolness, presence of mind and quick reactions averted immediate disaster and he made time and space to explore his options. Having so done, and decided to attempt a landing, he proceeded courageously and with consummate skill to effect a safe recovery in exceptionally dangerous circumstances.

Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct

U4284041 Sergeant Howard John DOWDING, Royal Air Force.

For his coolness, presence of mind and bravery displayed on 7th February 1979 when his prompt action prevented serious injury or loss of life following an accident with a primed grenade.

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